required in the existing Crop Insurance Scheme has given a number of suggestions including coverage of perennial/horticultural crops under a separate scheme. The report of this Group is under consideration of the Government.

Awareness about MSP

1811. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that 81 percent farmers do not know about the minimum support price;

(b) whether it is a fact that a good percentage of farmers are not aware of how to sell their produce under MSP; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to create awareness among farmers in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) According to Situation Assessment Survey of Farmers carried out by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in its 59th Round (January-December, 2003), 71 per cent of farmers did not know or understand the concept of Minimum Support Price. Among the farmers surveyed, 10 per cent understood what Minimum Support Price meant but not of the procurement agency. Remaining 19 per cent not only understood the idea of Minimum Support Price but also knew the agency (if not its name, its location) to which they would sell their crop if its market price fell below the Minimum Support Price.

(c) To create awareness among farmers support is provided to the States in strengthening extension programmes through a number of schemes. The various schemes include: support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms, Mass Media Support to Agriculture, Kisan Call Centres and Establishment of Agri-Clinic and Agri-Business Centres by Agriculture Graduates. Under the Central Sector Scheme on Mass Media Support to Agriculture Extension, agriculture related information and knowledge to the farming community is provided through 172 Narrow Casting Centres, 18 Regional Centres, 1 National Doordarshan Kendra and through 96 FM radio stations. Information on Minimum Support Prices of various commodities is being disseminated through these programmes to the farmers since September 2005 onwards.